

Dr. Burgess Special Address: Reflections on the Squirrel Hill Attack

October 29, 2018

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

This past weekend, I was deeply saddened by the violent attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I join with other Americans in mourning the loss of eleven innocent lives taken needlessly in this attack.

Along with President Trump, I condemn this wicked act as “pure evil.”

Let me be clear: No one should be targeted for their beliefs. Such violence toward any human being – whether a group of worshipers, an elected official, a member of the media, or anyone else – is inherently wrong and absolutely unacceptable.

The fact that this attack occurred at a synagogue during Shabbat service is particularly egregious.

The United States Constitution guarantees a number of inalienable rights, including the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice. This freedom is a core tenet of our American democracy. We must all fight to ensure that each American’s rights are protected. In the United States of America, no one should be afraid of worshiping freely.

At the moment, I fear that our country is facing a breakdown of discourse, a seminal aspect of the American political fabric. Our ability to overcome barriers to discuss solutions for the good of our country is in fact now in jeopardy. This cannot continue.

As our sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln, once said, “Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves.” The American people must come together for the sake of our neighbors in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in North Texas, and around the country.

As Americans, we must commit to working together for the good of the country. We must consider ideas from those with whom we do not always agree. And, we must reaffirm our belief that each person has been created and endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In the midst of this tragedy, I believe that we can come together to create a better future for generations of Americans yet to come.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your concerns on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, may God bless our Jewish neighbors, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.